Establishment of District Rural Development Agencies in Gujarat

1995. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Gujarat has established District Rural Development Agencies like that of Maharashtra;

(b) if not, whether Government would ask them to follow suit; and

(c) the details of the amount Central Government contributes towards pension and gratuity to be paid to the employees of the above agencies?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) and (b) Common guidelines have been issued to all the States/UTs, except Delhi and Chandigarh for DRDA organisation and its administration. According to the guidelines, every district will have its own DRDA. DRDAs in Gujarat have been established in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Government of India.

(c) As per the guidelines, the DRDAs do not have provision for permanent staff. The staff for DRDA is to be taken on deputation basis from other departments. The question of payment of pension to the staff of the DRDA, therefore, does not arise.

Land Degradation

1996. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) how many hectares of land in the country is degraded and how many hectares of land is under the threat of degradation; and

(b) what are the steps proposed to be taken to prevent the land degradation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The process of soil erosion and land degradation resulting into degraded lands/wastelands occur due to faulty cultivation practices, deterioration due to lack of